



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF A NATIONWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION EFFORT**

WASHINGTON, May 26, 1998— Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today invited governors to submit proposals for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and address other important environmental concerns.

"I want to use the CREP to address this country's most important environmental issues," said Glickman. "I am committing the necessary resources and expertise within USDA to work in partnership with every governor who wants our help in solving their most pressing environmental problems."

CREP is a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) highly successful Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This program is America's largest environmental improvement program, and can address critical environmental issues in every state.

CREP builds upon CRP in several important ways. First, it is designed to address specific state and local concerns since proposals are developed by governors in consultation with local citizens, including farmers and ranchers. Second, CREP is targeted to specific geographic areas of state and national significance, such as restoration of important habitat for endangered plant or animal species. Third, the program's flexibility permits the design of conservation strategies to address specific issues and concerns. Fourth, CREP is results-oriented requiring both measurable goals and monitoring of annual progress towards those goals.

CREP is already improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat in three states; Maryland, Minnesota, and Illinois. USDA has committed \$170 million to reduce nutrient inflow to the Chesapeake Bay, \$200 million to reduce sedimentation in the Illinois River, and \$163 million to improve the water quality of the Minnesota River.

Under CREP, federal CRP and state resources are combined to provide special financial incentives to farmers and ranchers to help solve agriculture-related environmental problems. In exchange for payments, farmers and ranchers agree to take their most environmentally sensitive lands out of production for periods of at least 10 years and plant native grasses, trees, or other vegetation, to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and provide habitat for threatened wildlife. The CREP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

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USDA is currently developing CREP proposals with New York to protect drinking water quality for New York City and with the Oregon and Washington for the protection of dwindling salmon stocks. Federal Register notice, scheduled to be published on May 27, invites governors to submit proposals and provides information to help other governors develop CREP proposals.

Information about CREP is available at state FSA offices and the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm)

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